



April 2, 2009

The Honorable Lamar Smith
United States House of Representatives
2409 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Smith:

I write to express my support for San Antonio Water System (SAWS) project requests for FY 2010 appropriations. As President/CEO of SAWS, I appreciate any assistance you can provide to SAWS public infrastructure projects that maximize ratepayer funding of public projects through a meaningful reinvestment of tax dollars locally in San Antonio and Bexar County.

SAWS requests \$3,000,000 in federal assistance to help fund the Brackish Groundwater Desalination Project (Desal Project). SAWS Desal Project will begin construction in south Bexar County and will develop a new water source for San Antonio through the desalination of brackish groundwater in the Wilcox Aquifer. Brackish water from the Wilcox Aquifer located regionally has the potential to supply between 11,000 acre feet per year (AF/yr) to over 22,400 AF/yr for many years. The facility will utilize the reverse osmosis process to remove salt and minerals from brackish groundwater, converting it to potable water. Public funds will be used for construction of the production wells to extract the brackish groundwater, which is expected to begin in 2010. Completion of the Desal Project is planned in 2014.

Public funds can help the development of a new water supply for San Antonio, a semi-arid region prone to drought. As SAWS looks to further diversify water resources from a sole source of the Edwards Aquifer, the project will utilize unused brackish groundwater from the Wilcox Aquifer, an extremely large, yet untapped source. SAWS goal is to ensure plentiful water resources for San Antonio and Bexar County into the future, and the development of brackish groundwater is an immediate choice to ensure sustainable maximization of available water resources.

Thank you for your consideration of SAWS FY 2010 funding requests. Please do not hesitate to contact my staff or me should you require further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Puente", is written over a horizontal line.

Robert R. Puente
President/CEO

RRP/wrp